

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 0020

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, EEC, BE

SUBJECT: BIO: FERNAND SPAAK

REF STATE 304677

1. AS NOTED REFTEL, WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ON THE CAREER OF FERNAND

SPAANK, SOON TO BE ACCREDITED AS HEAD OF THE EC DELEGATION IN WASHINGTON.

SPAANK IS, IN THE OPINION OF THOSE MEMBERS OF THE MISSION WHO HAVE HAD DEALINGS WITH HIM, PLEASANT, INTELLIGENT AND VERY MUCH A COMMITTED EUROPEAN. HE HAS BEEN FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBLE, BUT NOT PARTICULARLY FORTHCOMING. HE HAS ACTED LIKE A CAREFUL EUROCRAT, EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS IN

MAKING PREDICTIONS OR IN GIVING HIS PERSONAL VIEWS. IN A TOWN REplete WITH TALKATIVE PERSONALITIES, SPAANK COMES OFF AS AN INTELLIGENT BUT RATHER COLORLESS FUNTIONAIRE.

2. WE HAVE NOT HAD A CHANCE TO DISCUSS SPAANK'S ASPIRATIONS FOR HIS WASHINGTON ASSIGNMENT. HE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SEEK TO FURTHER GOOD US/EC RELATIONS AND ENHANCE THE ROLE OF THE WASHINGTON DELEGATION. AS POINT ED

OUT IN AN ECONOMIST ARTICLE (SEPTEMBER 20-26 ISSUE) THE SPAANK APPOINTMENT WILL MEAN HAVING SOMEONE IN WASHINGTON WHO KNOWS THE EC FROM THE INSIDE. THE FEELING HERE IS THAT NEITHER OF THE SPAANK PREDECESSORS WAS RIGHT FOR THE JOB--A DIPLOMAT AND A FORNER
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MINISTER. THE COMMISSION DECIDED TO TRY AN EXPERIENCED EC

BUREAUCRAT THIS TIME. GIVEN SPAAK'S INHERITED AND INHERENT FAITH IN THE "CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE" HE WILL ALSO LOOK UPON HIS POST IN WASHINGTON AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATE THE USG AND PUBLIC ON THE REALITIES OF PRESENT-DAY EUROPE AND HOPES FOR FUTURE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION.

3. SPAAK'S VIEWS: SPAAK'S COMMITMENT TO EUROPEAN UNIFICATION IS A CRUCIAL FACTOR IN ASSESSING HIS VIEWS ON POLITICAL ISSUES. FOR EXAMPLE, HE HAS BEEN LESS THAN WILDLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE IEA, NOT BECAUSE HE OPPOSES INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ENERGY BUT BECAUSE HE WOULD PREFER TO SEE THE FIRST PRIORITY PLACED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNAL EC ENERGY POLICY, AND BECAUSE HE SEES THE IEA AS TO SOME EXTENT SUPPLANTING INTRA-EC COOPERATION. SPAAK UNDOUBTEDLY FAVORS THE INCREASING EC SOLIDARITY WITH REGARD TO POLITICAL ISSUES AND AT VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO DIRECT INFORMATION ON HIS VIEWS CONCERNING NATO, WE WOULD ASSUME THAT HE IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO THE ALLIANCE PROVIDED THAT IT DOES NOT "INTERFERE" WITH THE BUILDING OF EUROPE. THE ECONOMIST HAS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE SPAAL APPOINTMENT BECAUSE HIS ATTACHMENT TO THE OLD-TIME EUROPEAN RELIGION SEEMS OUT OF TUNE WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION AND THINKING IN EUROPE.

4. SPAAK'S EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS: WE KNOW NOTHING ABOUT SPAAK'S HOBBIES OR INTERESTS. HE HAS NEVER INDICATED INTEREST IN SPORTS OR OTHER PASTIMES AND WE SUSPECT THAT HIS FREE TIME IN BRUSSELS HAS BEEN TAKEN UP BY HIS FAMILY. ONE OF HIS SISTERS WAS UNTIL RECENTLY IN BRUSSELS, MARRIED TO SIR MICHAEL PALLISER, THE FORMER BRITISH PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EC. ANOTHER SISTER, ALSO MARRIED, IS A RECENTLY ELECTED MEMBER OF THE BELGIAN PARLIAMENT.

5. PHOTO: PHOTOTHEQUE IS CLOSED UNTIL JANUARY 5. THE ONLY PHOTO OF SPAAK WHICH WE HAVE IS THAT TAKEN FROM HIS PASSPORT WHICH WAS ISSUED THIS DECEMBER. (WE UNDERSTAND FROM PREVIOUS CORRESPONDENCE THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO UTILIZE THIS XEROX COPY IN THE PREPARATION OF A BIO REPORT). HOWEVER, COMPARISON OF THIS PHOTO WITH THE PHOTO IN THE BIOGRAPHY DATED NOVEMBER 1974 REVEALS ONLY A SLIGHT CHANGE IN APPEARANCE, NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASING AGE. IF THE PRESS SERVICE OF THE EC COMMISSION
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OFFICE IN WASHINGTON IS UNABLE TO PROVIDE A PHOTO, PLEASE CABLE US AND WE WILL OBTAIN AND POUCH A PHOTO ON JANUARY 5.

6. ANNE MARIE FARINA SPAAK: MRS. SPAAK (BORN IN A BRUSSELS SUBURV ON NOVEMBER 18, 1921) IS BRIGHT, ARTICULATE, OUTGOING AND FRIENDLY. TOTALLY FLUENT IN ENGLISH, SHE IS AS MUCH OF A COMMITTED EUROPEAN AS HER HUSBAND. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SHE IS VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEW ASSIGNMENT AND INTENDS TO IMMERSE HERSELF

IN THE WASHINGTON SCENE WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON POLITICS AND
POLITICIANS AS OPPOSED TO PROTOCOL AND DIPLOMATS. IN A RECENT CONVERS

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ATION SHE INDICATED AN INTEREST IN GETTING TOGETHER WITH CONGRESSIONA
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AND POLITICAL WIVES AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT MRS. MARCEL CADIEUX, THE
WIFE OF THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE EC AND FORMER CANADIAN
AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON, WILL PROVIDE HER WITH INTRODUCTIONS TO THIS
"CIRCLE". THE SPAAKS ARE ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO RENEWING ACQUAINT-
ANCES WITH AMERICAN FRIENDS PREVIOUSLY STATIONED IN BRUSSELS, NOW
RESIDING IN WASHINGTON.

7. OUR INFORMATION INDICATES THAT THE SPAAKS HAVE THREE CHILDREN, NOT
FIVE AS PER REFTEL. (MARIE, BORN NOVEMBER 18, 1958; ISABELLE, BORN
OCTOBER 5, 1960; AND VIRGINIE, BORN DECEMBER 1, 1962). ALL THREE
CHILDREN WERE BORN IN UCCLE, A BRUSSELS SUBURB AND ARE TO BE
ENROLLED IN THE FRENCH LYCEE IN WASHINGTON. GREENWALD

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